

gravity & levity

In partnership with One Dance UK & Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts

2 - day healthier aerial/dance symposium - Jan 15th/16th 2022

Practice, pedagogical and personal approach presentations from aerial artists, researchers, body workers, medical and sports science practitioners.

Day 1 - Sat 15th Jan - 'Dissecting Aerial'

1, Dan Edwardes MA(Hons) MPhil (Cantab), Founder of Parkour Generations

UK time, 10.15 -10.55 (inc. Q&A)

'Longevity in Movement Practice'

In parkour we have the saying 'Etre et Durer', which translates as 'To be and to last'. Elite performance and long-term health do not often go hand-in-hand, and all of us in movement practice must find a way to navigate this reality if we want to not only realise our potential but also remain active and vibrant into later life. Fortunately there are some simple, though not easy, principles we can apply to our training, no matter what the discipline, to increase our chances of achieving both.

2, Mel Stevens (Founder of Aim to Fly and aerial artist)

UK time, 11.05 -12.05 (inc. Q&A)

'Accessibility and Inclusion.'

A presentation on what is meant by accessibility and on identifying the groups who are marginalised.

Mel will offer practical strategies for creating safe spaces and adaptations pre, during and post events and on the need for creating manifestos to support those and ourselves. Their presentation will also include Global Majority, Disability, Youth, Outdoor Arts, Queer communities and incorporate short films including neurodiverse artists, Tokenism, non-binary language and identifying microaggressions.

3, Saar Rombout & Francesca Hyde

UK time, 12.15 -1.15 (inc. Q&A) Live streamed from Stockholm

'Epistolary Aerial Adventures.' *Relationships with aerial apparatus and how the objects we work with have agency* - (practical - written).

What you'll need? A notebook and pen or pencil.

In this workshop we'll be working on a letter writing practice focusing on the relationship between different aspects involved in aerial work, for example; the perspective of your apparatus, a part of your body, a complaint, a desire, an injury, a sensation or a feeling. This way of thinking, in relationship to our aerial disciplines, has deepened our practice and given us creative tools and inspiration stemming from the bonds we have with our apparatus.

This letter writing practice was developed during writing workshops undertaken on our MFA in Contemporary Circus Practices by John Paul Zaccarini at SKH in Stockholm.

Lunch 1.15 - 2.15 Informal 'bring your lunch' discussion with Mel Stevens on UK funding thoughts for access and inclusion. 45 mins NB Not live streamed.

4, Moira McCormack MSc MCSP

UK time, 2.15 -2.55 (inc.Q&A)

'Recognising Hypermobility Spectrum Disorder and Hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome.'

Generalised Hypermobility is an asset for ballet dancers, other dance genres and 'extreme' performers. It is important for trainers and coaches to recognise the physique and understand the implications involved, and the specific demands for each individual performer.

The spectrum of hypermobility will be discussed, and assessment considered with regard to current classification and terminology.

In spite of hypermobility being an asset in aerial performers there are concerns when training the hypermobile physique:

the ability to control through range

the ability to build strength to withstand load

the ability to manage load and speed

avoidance of injury

Possible interventions to prevent injury – and enhance performance - will be discussed.

5, Serenity Smith Forchion

UK time, 3.05 - 4.05, Live streamed from Vermont

Proprioception Exercises for Hypermobile Humans - (practical)

What you'll need? A floor with space to lie down and a carpet, yoga mat, towel, or blanket for cushioning. Additionally but optionally, a wall to do handstands against, a trapeze to hang from, and/or a friend to do the exercises with.

For coaches and physical students of all abilities, this is a quick workshop on what proprioception is and how to design exercises to address the needs of students who seem floppy and disconnected. Part discussion, part practical - we'll define the pieces and then go through some sample exercises with a focus on what folks can do at home by themselves during this unique time.

6, Ginger Snaps Burlesque

UK time, 4.15 -5.10 (inc.Q&A), **Live streamed from Austin, Texas.**

'Attracting and Fostering Plus-Size Aerial Students'

This lecture is all about smashing stereotypes, exposing myths, and discussing spotting and teaching techniques for working with plus size aerial students. We like to say that circus is for everybody, so let's make sure we are prepared to work with every BODY that wants to try the sky!

You'll learn about how to break down the barriers (obvious and not so obvious) that often prevent plus size students from pursuing circus classes, as well as best spotting practices to keep both your student and you safe.

We'll also discuss and dispel common myths and tropes parroted by under-educated and often fat-phobic studio policies.

Day 2 - Sun 16th Jan - 'Dissecting Aerial'

1, Kim & Adrian Wildborne

UK time, 10 -11.25 (inc. Q&A)

'M.A.D c-shaping'. *The science of the c-shape by My Aerial Dictionary* - (practical)

What you'll need? Access to an aerial fabric

A highly practical session, focusing on c-shaping, the unique shape behind the ever elusive side planche, meat hook transitions, roll ups and many more higher level aerial skills. Designed for higher level students and those teaching who are keen to develop their understanding of the muscular and skeletal systems of the body, and how it affects their training.

Body knowledge is a crucial and often missed element of training. The ability to understand what needs strengthening, lengthening and mobilising, and most importantly of all, how to do it. M.A.D sessions uniquely provide building blocks for tests, postural analysis, anatomical awareness, safe conditioning and drills that are stepping stones to greater strength, mobility and stabilisation, in order to achieve a higher level of skill, and/or support your own students safely. This is a knowledge gaining session, with plenty of 'playtime' to analyse your next steps

2, Dr Nicola Keay, BA, MA, MB, BChir (Cantab), MRCP

UK time, 11.30 -12.10 (inc. Q&A)

'Harnessing hormones for older aerialists.' *The Menopause and maintaining optimal training.*

This discussion is relevant for all ages and however you identify. All women will experience the menopause. We will all know women who experience this transition and next phase in their life journey.

Throughout your life, hormones are key performers for health and therefore your performance. Female hormone networks are some of the most complex, which change over our lifespan, so, it is vital to tune into your hormones to reach your personal best over your life.

We will explore practical strategies to achieve this.

3, Stuart Waters

UK time, 12-15-12.55 (inc. Q&A)

'Approaches to building advocacy for diversity, mental health and emotional well being'

Stuart has a 23 year career in dance including aerial performance and will reflect and share how his profound lived experience with mental health and dance have intertwined and impacted on each other. Stuart will share his journey and reflect on his practice.

Lunch 1-2pm Informal lunch box discussion with Kim Charnock re aerial training, during & post pregnancy. 45 mins **NB Not live streamed.**

4, Erin Ball

UK time, 2 -3pm (60 mins inc. Q&A). Live streamed from Ontario, Canada.

***'Aerial fabric explorations with the Disability community.'* Starting points to engage with aerial fabric for non-typical bodies (and everyone) - (practical)**

What you'll need? Space enough around you to be able to move, access to an aerial fabric.

Do you want to welcome as many people as possible into your classes but you're not sure where to start with offerings for amputees, wheelchair users, etc? This session is for you.

In this workshop, we'll explore various base positions and offerings specifically to engage the Disability community on their aerial fabric journey.

Please familiarise yourself with Disability Justice and the work of Sins Invalid before attending this workshop.

5, Rachel Strickland

UK time, 3.10 - 4.10 (60 mins inc Q&A). Live streamed from Charleston, SC

'POSER': Navigating Imposter Syndrome and reclaiming your future as an artist

Rachel Strickland coaches some of the juiciest tenants from her flagship course, The Audacity Project: an 8-week guided process to equip artists with the tools necessary to be working professionals. In this 1-hour presentation, we will dive deep into the experience of Imposter Syndrome, and layout actionable tools for moving creative work forward in tangible ways. This is not for the faint of heart, or for spectators.

The premise of this talk is built on the axiom that there is always something we can do to take possession of our paths. It's dedicated to artists, and built to empower them to reclaim their futures, and create their own opportunities.

6, Ana Prada

UK time, 4.15 - 5.15 (60 mins inc Q&A). Live streamed from Montezuma, Costa Rica.

Presentation: 'Hanging with Awareness' – working with the principles of opposition, mobility and connection in the air - (practical).

What you'll need: A chair or stool, a yoga strap, or scarf and ideally access to an aerial fabric or rigged aerial equipment.

The more I teach Aerial, the more I notice a lack of awareness, in sensing our whole body whilst hanging. A lack of understanding the principles of opposition, creates tension overworking some parts of the body, in particular the shoulders, hips, hip flexors and the lower back, creating tension, injuries and limiting mobility and connection in the movement.

In this workshop we'll start with a warm up, based on Gyrokinesis, where we'll work to connect the principles of opposition, mobility and connection, before trying out how to apply those in simple movements in the air, (hanging, straddle and simple climbs,etc). We will also work with breath, exploring different breathing patterns and noticing the changes in connection, nervous system and stamina working with the concept of Hanging up and down, feeling the tri-dimensional body; front space, backspace and midline.